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HIPS Statement On Attack of Transgender Woman at H Street Giant

HIPS is outraged to hear that a transgender woman was assaulted yesterday by a security guard as she attempted to use the restroom at our local Giant store. As an organization, we offer services, support, and advocacy to transgender women everyday and witness the impact of compounded oppression, discrimination, and transphobia.

Washington, DC, which has the largest percentage of LGBTQ folks in the United States, is well aware of the the unique vulnerabilities facing the community. In the DC Transgender Health Assessment, 4 out of 5 transgender respondents reported having been physically or sexually assaulted. 50% were unemployed, 25% were homeless, and over 40% had been denied a job they were qualified for.

Since 2006, the local Human Rights Act has prohibited discrimination based on gender identity or expression, which includes the use of public restrooms. Additionally, all single-stall restrooms in the District are required to be gender neutral as promoted through the #safebathroomsDC campaign. HIPS is proud to be located in a city that legally protects the human rights of transgender folks, however, incidents such as this show that legal protections are not enough.

The profiling and policing of transgender women is not limited to our restrooms, but also takes place in our medical facilities, in our jobs, in our restaurants, on our streets, and in our housing complexes--at the hands of security guards, police officers, family, acquaintances, and strangers. Without public awareness and public support, the human rights of transgender folks will continue to be violated.

To address this issue, HIPS calls for expansive cultural competency training of all employees in the District, including Giant and the security company involved in this incident. HIPS calls for greater access to employment, housing, and healthcare free of judgment and stigma. HIPS also calls for an end to profiling and criminalization at the intersections of race, gender, gender identity, or expression.

For interviews:

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